

JULY 12, 1978

THE LONGEST WALK
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

(EDITORS NOTE: FOR USE ON OR BEFORE JULY 15, 1978)

ANNCR: AS MANY AS TWO THOUSAND NATIVE AMERICANS WILL ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON THIS WEEKEND (7/15), TO DEMAND BETTER TREATMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND TO CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNFAVORABLE LEGISLATION NOW BEFORE THE CONGRESS. JOHN LENNON HAS WRITTEN THIS REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES THEY HAVE PLANNED, AND THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THEIR PROTEST.

NARR: NATIVE AMERICANS, LONG KNOWN AS AMERICAN INDIANS, ONCE POPULATED THE ENTIRE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT, NUMBERING IN THE MILLIONS. FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS THEIR TRIBAL NATIONS FLOURISHED, DEVELOPING CULTURAL AND SOCIAL PATTERNS UNIQUE IN HUMAN HISTORY. BUT TODAY, AMERICAN INDIANS LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES RESEMBLE LITTLE MORE THAN A CONQUERED PEOPLE -- NUMBERING JUST A FEW HUNDRED THOUSAND, WITH TWO-THIRDS OF THEIR POPULATION LIVING ON ISOLATED RESERVATIONS.

THE DECLINE OF THESE ONCE-PROUD PEOPLE HAS BEEN WELL DOCUMENTED, AND HISTORIANS GENERALLY AGREE THAT THE STORY OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN IS A TRAGIC ONE. THEY ALSO AGREE THAT THE TRAGEDY HAS BEEN COMPOUNDED BY DECADES OF ROMANTIC NOVELS, DEPICTING GALLANT AND BRAVE SOLDIERS DEFENDING HELPLESS WHITE SETTLERS AGAINST SAVAGE INDIAN ATTACKS.

NARR: (CONT) FOR THE PAST FIVE MONTHS, MEMBERS OF MANY DIFFERENT INDIAN TRIBES FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAVE TAKEN PART IN WHAT THEY CALL "THE LONGEST WALK" -- A FIVE-THOUSAND-KILOMETER JOURNEY FROM NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TO WASHINGTON, D.C. THEY ARE PROTESTING AGAINST WHAT THEY SEE AS THE CONTINUING SUBJUGATION OF THEIR PEOPLE, THE LOSS OF THEIR CULTURE, THE COWBOYS-AND-INDIANS STEREOTYPE.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- BELLECOURT

"WE ARE TRYING TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE JOHN WAYNE, FRONTIER MENTALITY OF THE NEWS PEOPLE IN THE MEDIA, AND THE WAY THEY FEEL ABOUT INDIAN PEOPLE. WE ARE TRYING TO CREATE THE TRUE IMAGE, NOT THE IMAGE THAT HAS BEEN PORTRAYED IN THE HISTORY BOOKS OF SAVAGES AND HEATHENS."

NARR: CLYDE BELLECOURT IS A LEADER OF THE LONGEST WALK, AND ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT. THAT MOVEMENT -- KNOWN AS "AIM" -- WAS ESTABLISHED A FEW YEARS AGO TO ENCOURAGE NATIVE AMERICANS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR ANCIENT AND FORGOTTEN LANGUAGES, CULTURE AND HISTORY.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- BELLECOURT

"OUR CULTURE HAS EXISTED, OUR CULTURES AND OUR GOVERNMENTS HAVE EXISTED FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS; THEY EXISTED TO THE POINT THAT GREAT STATESMEN LIKE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN COPIED THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GREAT IRIQUOIS CONFEDERACY, THE LAW OF PEACE. BUT HE ONLY COPIED PART OF IT; (THE AUTHORS OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION) LEFT OUT THE VALUE SYSTEM (BASED ON) SHARING WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND INSTITUTED THEIR OWN GOD, WHICH IS STAMPED ON THEIR COINS -- 'IN GOD WE TRUST'. GOLD BECAME THEIR VALUE SYSTEM."

NARR: CLYDE BELLECOURT AND OTHER INDIAN LEADERS SAY THAT DESPITE THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF WESTERN VALUES, THE TRADITIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN VALUE SYSTEM REMAINS LARGELY INTACT. ONE OF THE GOALS OF THE LONGEST WALK, SCHEDULED TO REACH WASHINGTON

NARR: ON SATURDAY, IS TO PROMOTE THAT VALUE SYSTEM. ITS
(CONT:) RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN STRESSED
THROUGHOUT THE CROSS-COUNTRY MARCH, AND WILL BE A PROMINENT
PART OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND RALLIES TO TAKE PLACE
NEXT WEEK. / ONE OF THE ORGANIZERS OF THE WALK, SCOTT
RAYMOND, EXPLAINS.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- RAYMOND

"WE HAD OUR SWEAT BATHS, PIPE CEREMONIES, PEYOTE CEREMONIES,
AND THINGS THAT WERE OUTLAWED -- THINGS WE HAD BEEN TOLD
WERE PAGAN AND NOT WHAT HUMAN BEINGS SHOULD BE TAKING
PART IN. THESE THINGS ARE STILL ALIVE WITH OUR ELDERS AND
OUR TRADITIONAL PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE
COUNTRY, AND WHAT WE ARE DOING IS WE ARE TRYING TO BRING
BACK OUR RELIGION, OUR SPIRITUALITY, AND I GUESS THIS IS
ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE LONGEST WALK -- IT'S
A SPIRITUAL EFFORT."

NARR: BUT PERHAPS THE MOST IMMEDIATE CONCERN OF THE NATIVE
AMERICANS TAKING PART IN THIS SYMBOLIC MARCH IS A SERIES
OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS -- ELEVEN BILLS NOW BEFORE
CONGRESS -- WHICH, THE INDIANS SAY, WOULD ELIMINATE MANY OF
THEIR RIGHTS GAINED OVER THE YEARS THROUGH TREATIES, COURT
RULINGS AND FAVORABLE LEGISLATION. AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE
CURRENT SERIES OF PROPOSED LAWS WOULD CUT BACK ON FISHING
AND WATER RIGHTS, CLOSE INDIAN HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND
HOUSING PROJECTS, AND ELIMINATE THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF
INDIAN AFFAIRS. BACKERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE MEASURES SAY
THEY WOULD LIFT THE STIGMA OF INDIAN STATUS, AND PLACE
INDIANS ON AN EQUAL FOOTING IN AMERICAN SOCIETY. BUT
LEADERS OF THE LONGEST WALK SEE THE BILLS AS THE ULTIMATE
THREAT, THE FINAL BLOW THAT WOULD FORCE INDIANS TO ADOPT
AMERICAN VALUES AND ABANDON THEIR ANCIENT TRADITIONS. SCOTT
RAYMOND PUTS IT THIS WAY.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- RAYMOND

"I SEE THE ANTI-INDIAN LEGISLATION AS AN ADMISSION OF RACISM AND GENOCIDE, AND THE LEGALIZATION OF RACISM AND GENOCIDE IS SURFACING IN THE CONGRESS. WE THINK THIS IS TERRIBLE, AND WE ARE ASKING ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF AMERICA TO STAND UP WITH US AND STOP IT."

NARR: IT IS THIS DIVERSE COMBINATION OF ISSUES -- MODERN LAWS AND ANCIENT TRADITIONS -- THAT WILL BE THE FOCUS OF PUBLIC ATTENTION NEXT WEEK, AS AMERICAN INDIANS END THEIR LONGEST WALK AND APPEAL FOR RECOGNITION AND JUSTICE.

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